(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this move of Government to grant permission is being opposed by environmentalists, anthropologists and a fact finding committee appointed by the Supreme Court as digging up the Niyamgiris would be a social and environmental catastrophe and would pollute rivers and streams on which thousands of people depend; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) The Central Government on the proposal/recommendation of the State Government of Orissa had conveyed prior approval in favour of M/s Orissa Mining Corporation Limited for grant of mining lease for Bauxite ore over an area of 721.323 ha. in Lanjigarh, Distt. Kalahandi and Raigada for a period of 30 (thirty) years. The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) and the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted by Supreme Court of India considered the issues of diversion of forest land on rivers/streams, flora and fauna, soil and hydrology and the Supreme Court of India granted clearance for forest diversion proposal for diversion of 660.749 ha. of forest land to undertake Bauxite Mining on Niyamgiri Hills in Lanjigarh on which suitable action has been taken.

Conversions to other religions

2246. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Christian population in the country as per 1991 and 2001 census respectively;

(b) whether Government is aware of any forcible conversion from Hinduism to Christianity or from Christianity to Hinduism;

(c) whether any case has been registered in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's action in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) Percentage of Christian population in the country as per 1991 and 2001 census was 2.342 and 2.341 respectively.

(b) to (d) 'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Constitution of India and hence prevention, detection, registration, investigation and prosecution of crimes are primarily the concern of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

Some State Governments have enacted laws providing for prohibition of conversion from one religious faith to any other religious faith by use of force or inducement or by fraudulent means, *etc.*

Economic status of minorities

†2247. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that the downtrodden and the minority people in the country are living on less than twenty rupees a day;

(b) if so, whether Government is formulating any effective plan to change the standard of living of crores of such people; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) The Planning Commission estimates the incidence of poverty at National and State levels from the large sample survey on household consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. Based on this, only the percentage of population living below the poverty line has been estimated.

(b) and (c) Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the minorities. The Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities which has specific programme interventions to improve the social, economic and educational status of minorities, is a major step in this direction. Three scholarship schemes *viz* merit-cum means based scholarship scheme, pre-matric scholarship scheme and post-matric scholarship scheme, free coaching and allied scheme and a multi-sectoral development programme are being implemented by this Ministry apart from the schemes and programmes of National Minorities Finance Development Corporation, Central Waqf Council and Maulana Azad Education Foundation. The details are available on the website *www.minorityaffairs.gov.in*.

Grants to Wakf Boards

2248. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the States which have large number of Wakfs like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab are not extending any grant-in-aid to their respective Wakf Boards and even to the Central Wakf Council (CWC);

(b) whether the Wakf Act maintains that the State Governments are duty bound to provide adequate financial support to them;

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to make if incumbent upon States to give financial support to the Boards;

(d) if not, the reaction therefor; and

(e) whether the Central Government has extended any support to CWC during the last three years and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) There is no provision in the Wakf Act, 1995 for mandatory financial support by the State Governments to the State Wakf Boards.

(e) No establishment/administrative grant is provided by the Central Government to the Central Wakf Council.